PRO AND CON:

A SATIRICO-POLITICAL DIALOGUE.

PRO AND CON :

A SATIRICO-POLITICAL DIALOGUE

IN FAMILIAR RHYME.

PARTLY IMITATED FROM THE LATIN OF HORACE,

AND DEDICATED (WITHOUT PERMISSION)

TO THE LATE GRAND JURY.

Primum ego me illorum dederim quibus esse Poetas
Excerpam numero : neque enim concludere versum
Dixeris esse satis ; neque, si quis scribat, uti nos,
Sermoni propriora, putes hunc esse Poetam.

HORAT :

QUEBEC, MAY 1828.

N. B. The figures at the close of the Lines refer to Notes at the end of the Poem.

PRO AND CON, &c.

EDITOR.

WELL met, my friend ! 'tis rumor'd through the Town,
That I've incurr'd the GRAND JURATORS' frown.
'Tis said of law and temper I fall short, (1.)
Sudden in quarrel, fiery in retort :
That each official paragraph, alas !
Ranks in the guilty, reprobated class.
Others again, (how hard it is to amuse
The Public whim !) arraign the dearth of news,
Charging each *lengthy* column as a waste
Of eyesight, time, and patience, void of taste,
Eked out with Tory praises, maxims wrong,
And SHERIFF's sales inexorably long.
In this dilemma, worthy friend and true,
Instruct me, pr'y thee, what am I to do ? (2.)

FRIEND.

Be wise, and silent : rest awhile the quill—
Let those who *lose* their places, write their fill.

EDITOR.

Mean you to say, that I should tamely hold
My peace, by Faction's taunts unmov'd, and cold ?

FRIEND.

Such my advice—

EDITOR.

Think not I live by strife ;
But not to write, would be to *sleep* thro' life.

FRIEND.

Some potent remedy you fain would find,
To drive these endless politics from the mind.
Three times a day, ere Sol withdraws his beam, (3.)
Swim o'er the current of yon noble stream :
Thrice over ABRAM's plain, with action free,
Double the distance to DALHOUSIE tree :
Dine with a friend, or ask a friend to dine,
And ripen friendship over gen'rous wine :
Seek exercise by day, and sleep by night—
In short, my friend, do any thing but *write !*
Renounce the " plural unit"—take advice—
And ere you *once* ink paper, ponder *twice.**
Yet, if you needs must scribble, wiser far, } (4.)
Indite a treatise, like the classic Star, †
On Trade—Coin—Tenures—Wigwams, or a War. }
Do this, and hope to win Subscribers plenty—
For ev'ry one you boast, I'll vouch you twenty.
Such are the themes delight the age refin'd,
Such in QUEBEC the mighty march of mind !

EDITOR.

Your words convince me ; yet, tho' strong the will,
Such subjects far o'ertop my humble skill. (5.)
'Tis not for me to sing the MOOSE's fall,**
The patient hunter, and th' unerring ball :
Such scenes to paint, without the actor's fire,
Would weary me, and ev'ry reader tire.
Twere easier far to make PORSONIAN Greek,
And SHAKSPEARE's heroes in Iambics speak.

FRIEND.

Still may you make essay, and try your best,
None can do more, to give these troubles rest.

---

* *Vide* " The Star" of a recent date.—" Complex" to wit.
† " Star," *passim.*
** *Vide* " Star."

For general good, all party heat suppress :
Dare to begin, and you insure success.

EDITOR.

Let rival Journals meek examples show, (6.)
To follow good mine never shall be slow.
In more congenial times, I yet may gain
The public voice, nor labor all in vain :
Till then, I'll stand the hazard of the dice,
Nor flatter Faction for a Kingdom's price.

FRIEND.

Yet, how much wiser 'tis, to sheathe the sword, (7.)
Than rush to combat at each angry word.
Though venom point the Faction's lawless pen,
What need compels my friend to rail again ?

EDITOR.

What shall I do to please ? Methinks, you'll find (8.)
That various passions move the human mind.
One it delights with fashionable skill,
To thread the mazes of the last Quadrille--
Another glories in the graceful foil,
And trains the sinews with gymnastic toil—
A third 'mong horsemen burns to be a King,
Leaps o'er the bar, and curvets round the ring—
A fourth puts on the pugilistic glove,
And gives and takes a *milling*--all for love !—
Wherefore should I not boast an equal pride,
To stem the torrent of the popular tide—
Reduce to reason Democratic rant,
And bring to test the age's *liberal* cant ?
When Bodies, held deliberative, dare
To plant a Party minion in the Chair—
Draw from its rest the unobtrusive Mace,
That Royal emblem of *acknowledged* place—

And, bold in numbers, after mock debate,
Vote the KING's will, a fiction of the State—
Not to confute such doctrine, were to swerve
Basely from Honor, and the cause we serve !
There are who winc'd beneath my honest zeal :
One must cut deep, to make the callous feel.
Some freezing politicians may have felt
Their temper oozing, and their caution melt ;
And all unus'd to own the gen'rous glow,
Threw back on me the *faults* they ne'er could know !
Let those condemn, who prove what word of mine
Has FREEDOM's range e'er tended to confine—
What well directed impulse of the soul
My pen has sought to force within control—
What right invaded, to maintain the wrong—
The weak abandon'd, to uphold the strong—
Show any sentiment that may not grace
The free-est son of BRITAIN's freeborn race ?
—— If, while such principles direct my pen,
A hasty word should 'scape it, now and then,
'Twere best to weigh the general sense inferr'd,
Not carp and fret at each particular word :
'Twere good to search, and true enquiry make,
Who first was known decorum's law to break :
Who first forgot the "courtesies of life,"
And gave the tone to Editorial strife ?

FRIEND.

Tis not the question, as my judgment goes,
Whence the fell Demon of debate arose :
Be you, as ever, Champion for the CROWN,
But throw no useless gauntlet, rashly, down.
To seek out cures for each COLONIAL ill,
Belongs to older heads, and deeper skill.
Try to please all—to rancour yield a truce—
Combat with argument, but scorn abuse.

EDITOR.

We are no superhuman monsters, who
Give reasons exquisite for all they do ;
But men, who feeling injury, will speak,
And somewhat to the purpose—once a week.
And yet 'twere well, each hostile thought repress'd,
To give the sword in peaceful scabbard rest : (9.)
Secure in arm'd neutrality to stand,
Greeting each *quondam* foe with open hand !
But—should the truce be broken ?

FRIEND.

— Quick prepare
Each pomp and circumstance of wordy war !
Let bold defiance from the goose-quill flow,
And ink in torrents blacken every foe !
Till each GAZETTE shall trumpet through the town, (10.)
Their dire defeat, the victor's high renown.

EDITOR.

And 'tis but just : since natural instincts teach
To use the weapons first within our reach. (11.)
The Wolf with ravenous jaw pursues his foe,
The horned Bull deals death at ev'ry blow.
I wield the pen, nor shall, with all his art,
The foeman boast from me unscath'd to part.
Not to be long—whatever fate may bring, (12.)
Should Death o'ershadow me with dusky wing,
Or nature yield me tranquil length of days—
Wealthy or poor, where'er I bend my ways,
Or homeward, to the land of BRITONS' pride,
Or where ST. LAWRENCE rolls his mighty tide—
Whate'er my prospects, still I'll boldly write,
To strengthen justice, and defend the right.

FRIEND.

'Tis well express'd : I must confess in this,
I see not what the Critics find amiss. (13.)
Yet, while you write thus fearlessly, beware
Lest warmth of feeling tempt you to a snare.
'Tis held for Law, too roughly to assail
Subjects the culprit to a penal bail :
The thin-skinn'd gentry are so very nice,
You'll be on *good behaviour* in a trice.

EDITOR.

Laws, which restrain the licence of the Press,
Protect its Freedom and its usefulness.
Banish your fears, my friend ; for in my mind,
Its Liberty and Honor are combined :
Past Freedom's limit whosoe'er encroach,
Sully its Honor, taint it with reproach.
The law will reach the Libeller, while he,
Who loves the Press, will guard its dignity.
To aid Religion and establish Right,
To blend at once instruction and delight :
The truth diffuse, and men with knowledge bless,
These are the noblest uses of the Press.
'Tis doubly foul such uses to profane,
And turn a sacred blessing into bane !
Shame on the wretch who, mad with party rage,
Or hir'd for lucre, prostitutes his page :
But, oh ! on him descend a heavier curse,
Who knowing better, still pursues the worse !

FRIEND.

Go on and prosper ! I were well content,
That all would profit by the sentiment.
Resist a Faction, when it beards the Throne,
With courage ever—but by law alone :

Within the line the CONSTITUTION draws
Dispute each inch, and perish in her cause.

EDITOR.

Let EDUCATION ply her useful arts,
And patriot citizens act well their parts,
Scorning to wear a poor, prudential mask,
But courting duty, though a dangerous task :
Let honest men restrain with wholesome curb
Those who their peace and happiness disturb :
Marking with public stigma, and disgust,
All factious plotters to excite mistrust !
Do justice to the CHIEF, whose ardent zeal
Both guards your honor, and consults your weal,
Then, happy PROVINCE ! shall thy gallant race,
With nations more instructed take their place ;
And quickly vindicate to fairer fame,
The stock they rose from, and their ancient name !

FRIEND.

Bravo ! my friend ! on such an argument, (14.)
Write on till Doomsday, with my heart's consent !

REFERENCES.

HORATIUS, SAT. LIB. 2. SAT. 1.

HORATIUS.

(1) Sunt quibus in Satirâ videor nimis acer, et ultrà
Legem tendere opus; sine nervis altera, quicquid
Composui, pars esse putat.

(2) Trebati,
Quid faciam præscribe.

TREBATIUS.

Quiescas.

HORATIUS.

Ne faciam, inquis,
Omnino versus?

TREBATIUS.

Aio.

HORATIUS.

Peream malè, si non
Optimum erat; verùm nequeo dormire.

TREBATIUS.

(3) Ter uncti
Transnanto Tiberim, somno quibus est opus alto,
Irriguumque mero sub noctem corpus habento.

(4) Aut, si tantus amor scribendi te rapit, aude
Cæsaris invicti res dicere, multa laborum
Præmia laturus.

HORATIUS.

(5) Cupidum, pater optime, vires
Deficiunt: neque enim quivis horrentia pilis
Agmina, nec fractâ pereuntes cuspide Gallos,
Aut labentis equo describat vulnera Parthi.

(6) Haud mihi deero
Quum res ipsa feret.

TREBATIUS.

(7) Quantò rectius hoc, quam tristi lædere versu
Pantolabrum scurram, &c.

HORATIUS.

(8) Quid faciam? Saltat Milonius, ut semel icto
Accessit fervor capiti numerusque lucernis:
Castor gaudet equis; ovo prognatus eodem,
Pugnis: quot capitum vivunt, totidem studiorum
Millia. Me pedibus delectat claudere verba.

(9) Sed hic stylus haud petet ultrò
Quemquam animantem; et me veluti custodiet ensis

Vaginâ tectus ; quem cur distringere coner,
Tutus ab infestis latronibus ?

(10) Flebit, et insignis totâ cantabitur urbe.

(11) Ut quò quisque valet, suspectos terreat, utque
Imperet hoc natura potens, sic collige mecum :
Dente lupus, cornu taurus petit : unde, nisi intùs
Monstratum ?

(12) Ne longum faciam ; seu me tranquilla senectus
Expectat, seu mors atris circumvolat alis ;
Dives, inops ; Romæ, seu fors ita jusserit, exul ;
Quisquis erit vitæ, scribam, color.

TREBATIUS.

(13) Equidem nihil hìc diffindere possum.
Sed tamen, ut monitus caveas, ne fortè negotî
Incutiat tibi quid sanctarum inscitia legum,
Si mala condiderit in quem quis carmina, jus est
Judiciumque.

HORATIUS.

Esto, si quis mala ; sed bona si quis
Judice condiderit laudatur.

TREBATIUS.

(14) Solventur risu tabulæ, tu missus abibis.